

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 10 and 11 have been amended in order to properly define the claims.

Claims 10-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §§ 112 and 101.

In response, claims 10 and 11 have been amended to obviate these rejections, and thus withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0088006 to Yanagisawa et al (“Yanagisawa”). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Yanagisawa teaches that the aqueous slurry of the filler is prepared by using a high-shear mixer of a rotor-stator type. However, Yanagisawa fails to teach or suggest that a high-shear mixer of the rotor-stator type is used for mixing the rubber solution and the slurry solution.

In contrast, when the static mixer or the high shear mixer comprising the rotor and the stator portion is used for mixing the rubber solution and the slurry solution according to the present invention, a homogeneous coagulation takes place. *See*, working Example of the present specification. One skilled in the art would not expect such homogeneous coagulation from Yanagisawa.

In the mixture of the rubber solution and the slurry solution, a coagulated mass is naturally formed even before adding an acid. In fact, coagulation occurs prior to mixing. As demonstrated by the Comparative Example of the present specification, mixing the rubber solution and the slurry solution is insufficient to obtain a resulting master batch with a constant amount of carbon black.

In contrast, mixing of the rubber solution and the slurry solution can be sufficiently carried out prior to the occurrence of coagulation in the present invention, so that a variation of carbon black content is very low and the resulting coagulated mass is very homogeneous. One skilled in the art would not expect such a result from Yanagisawa. Thus, the present invention is not obvious from Yanagisawa. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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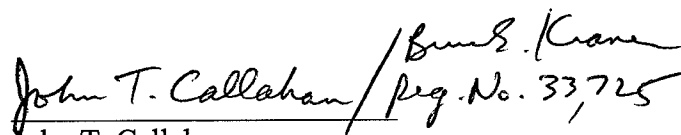
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